

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 NEA-06 ISO-00 PM-03 NSC-05 SP-02 SS-15 RSC-01

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P R 181245Z NOV 74

FM AMEMBASSY RABAT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 3810

INFO AMEMBASSY MADRID

USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN GER

C O N F I D E N T I A L RABAT 5596

FROM THE AMBASSADOR

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MASS MOR

SUBJ: ADDITIONAL US ARMS SALES TO MOROCCO

REF: MADRID 7152

1. I HAVE NOTED WHAT I CONSIDER AN OVER-REACTING AND ALARMIST VIEW EXPRESSED BY THE SPANISH IN REGARD TO OUR MODEST AND LONG RANGE FMS PROGRAM IN MOROCCO. THEIR REACTION SEEMS SO OUTSIZED AS TO BE EXPLAINABLE TO ME ONLY IN TACTICAL TERMS: A) TO PUT THEM IN A STRONGER POSITION VIS-A-VIS OUR FORTHCOMING BASE RIGHTS RENEGOTIATIONS AND ALSO, B) TO KEEP US UNDER SUFFICIENT PRESSURE TO ASSURE OUR CONTINUED NEUTRALITY IN THE SAHARA DISPUTE.

2. AS INDICATED IN REFTTEL, OUR EFFORT IS NOTHING BUT AN ATTEMPT TO HELP A RELATIVELY SMALL NEIGHBOR (OF SPAIN) IN ITS MODERNIZATION EFFORT OF A FORCE WHOSE EFFECTIVENESS HAS BEEN SIGNIFICANTLY LOWERED BY LOSS AND AGING OF ITS EQUIPMENT. I WISH TO OUTLINE ONCE AGAIN THAT THIS MODERNIZATION PROGRAM WAS CONCEIVED AND COMMENCED PURSUANT TO THE DIRECTIVES OF SECRETARY KISSINGER AT
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HIS FIRST VISIT TO RABAT IN NOVEMBER 1973, AND HENCE

PRIOR TO THE SURFACING OF THE SAHARA ISSUE. IT SHOULD ALSO BE REMEMBERED THAT KING HASSAN HAS TWICE GIVEN ME HIS ASSURANCES THAT OUR EQUIPMENT WILL NEVER BE USED AGAINST OUR FRIENDS AND SINCE HIS SECOND ASSURANCE OCCURED AFTER THE BEGINNING OF THE SAHARA ISSUE, IT IS CLEAR THAT HE HAD IN MIND ISRAEL AND SPAIN. THE KING'S RECORD, AS WELL AS THE TYPE OF EQUIPMENT HE USED IN SYRIA AND EGYPT, GIVES US EVERY CONFIDENCE THAT HIS PROMISE CAN BE TAKEN AT FACE VALUE.

3. ALTHOUGH THE FACTS LISTED BELOW ARE WELL KNOWN TO THE DEPARTMENT, I CONSIDER IT USEFUL TO SUMMARIZE OUR PLANS AS FOLLOWS: THE FORCE MODERNIZATION PROGRAM, WHICH IS VERY MODEST COMPARED TO THE ALREADY IN-BEING FORCE LEVELS OF ANY OF MOROCCO'S NEIGHBORING COUNTRIES, WILL TAKE FOUR TO FIVE YEARS IN ACQUISITION OF EQUIPMENT ALONE, TO SAY NOTHING OF THE ADDITIONAL TRAINING TIME REQUIRED TO BECOME TRULY OPERATIONAL. BECAUSE OF FISCAL RESTRAINTS WHICH ARE UNLIKELY TO IMPROVE, THE PROGRAM IS NECESSARILY BEING UNDERTAKEN IN INCREMENTS. HERE ARE A FEW EXAMPLES: THE SIDEWINDERS THUS FAR PURCHASED NUMBER 180 WHICH ARE LIKELY TO BE LARGELY CONSUMED IN TRAINING. LIGHT ANTITANK WEAPONS THAT HAVE BEEN PURCHASED ARE OF THE TYPE THAT HAVE A MAXIMUM RANGE OF 300 METERS - HARDLY AN OFFENSIVE WEAPON. THE TANKS DELIVERED THUS FAR NUMBER 26 AND ARE ONLY SUFFICIENT TO EQUIP TWO TANK COMPANIES. AS IS COMMON KNOWLEDGE THE U.S. ARMY TANK SITUATION BOTH IN BEING AND IN PRODUCTION, IS SUCH THAT DELIVERIES OF 50 TO 100 TANKS WOULD TAKE YEARS.

4. REFERENCE TO F-5 AIRCRAFT IN CONTEXT NOTED, IS AN OBVIOUS OUTGROWTH OF A SIMPLE REQUEST FOR PRICE AND AVAILABILITY WHICH IS A NORMAL PLANNING ACTION FOR ANY COUNTRY WITH AN FMS RELATIONSHIP WITH THE UNITED STATES. THERE HAVE BEEN NO REACTIONS OR FOLLOW-UP TO THIS INFORMATION.

5. I TRUST THAT THE ABOVE SUMMARIZED INFORMATION WILL BE USEFUL ESPECIALLY IN ITS REFERENCE TO TIMING AS THE SPANISH REACTION SEEMS TO MAKE MUCH OF THAT POINT.

6. I BELIEVE THAT DEPARTMENT'S SUGGESTION CONTAINED IN
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PARA 7, REFTTEL, CONTINUES TO BE VALID. PROJECTED EQUIPMENT DELIVERY LEAD TIMES OF FUTURE ACQUISITION INCREMENTS, IF AND WHEN THEY ARE MADE, WILL CONTINUE CLEARLY TO ILLUSTRATE THAT THIS IS NOT REPEAT NOT A FRANTIC BUILDUP THAT WILL OCCUR IN ONE OR TWO YEARS. AS CORRECTLY STATED REFTTEL, HOWEVER, ALL MILITARY INFORMATION ESPECIALLY PLANS ARE REGARDED BY GOM AS HIGHLY SENSITIVE. THIS IS WHY KING INSISTS ON DEALING WITH ME DIRECTLY ON EVEN RELATIVELY TECHNICAL

POINTS. TO GIVE TOO MUCH DETAIL TO THE SPANISH WOULD PUT GOS IN A POSITION, BY WELL-PLANNED LEAKS, TO QUEER OUR RELATIONS WITH MOROCCO AT A TIME OF ITS CHOOSING AND FOR TACTICAL PURPOSES USEFUL ONLY TO IT.

7. AT SOME DATE IN THE NEAR FUTURE IT MAY BE POSSIBLE TO CONVEY INFORMATION ON DELIVERY LEAD TIMES TO THE SPANISH IN SUCH A MANNER SO AS TO CONSTITUTE A STILL MORE CONVINCING AND FOR THAT MATTER ACCURATE EXPLANATION THAT THESE SALES AND PROPOSED FUTURE SALES DO NOT AND CANNOT POSSIBLY SIGNIFICANTLY AFFECT THE BALANCE OF POWER IN THE AREA TO SPAIN'S DETRIMENT. THERE SHOULD BE ABSOLUTELY NO DOUBT ABOUT THE FACT THAT THE MOROCCANS AND ESPECIALLY KING HASSAN ARE DETERMINED TO MODERNIZE THEIR ARMED FORCES. THEY PREFER OUR EQUIPMENT BECAUSE OF ITS QUALITY AND ALSO BECAUSE THEY VALUE THEIR RELATIONSHIP WITH US. BUT IF THEY FAIL IN THIS, THEY WOULD NOT HESITATE, AS THEY HAVE MADE CLEAR, TO SWITCH TO FRENCH EQUIPMENT WHICH CAN BE MADE AVAILABLE MORE QUICKLY THAN OURS NOT TO SPEAK OF EAGER SUPPLIERS FARTHER EAST. NONE OF THEM ARE LIKELY TO BE AS SENSITIVE TO SPAIN'S CONCERNS AS WE ARE. THEREFORE IT WOULD SEEM HARDLY IN SPAIN'S INTERESTS TO INTERFERE WITH OUR MODEST AND LONG-RANGE PROGRAM.

8. IN SUM, I CONTINUE TO BELIEVE THAT FOR TIME BEING WE SHOULD LIMIT OUR BRIEFINGS IN MADRID ON OUR MILITARY ASSISTANCE PROGRAM HERE AS SUGGESTED IN CONCLUDING PARAGRAPH RABAT 5548.
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